

For a happy 2017, put creativity on your to-do list!



Do household chores, administrative tasks, and other rote tasks dominate your to-do list? Welcome to the club! It's high time you add something more enjoyable. Doing activities that get your creative juices flowing may boost your overall well-being, according to a new study. When hundreds of students tracked their daily activities along with their emotional states, a pattern emerged: the day after writing poetry, painting, knitting, singing or playing an instrument, cooking a new recipe, and other creative activities, they reported feeling more enthusiasm and a higher level of "flourishing," psychology-speak for internal positive growth. It may have something to do with a concept called flow, a state that occurs "when you engage in an activity in such a way that it becomes effortless and you lose self-awareness, forget time, and suspend your judgment," says Cleveland Clinic psychologist Scott Bea, Psy.D. And here's the best part: You don't have to be Monet, Yo-Yo Ma or Neruda to achieve this state. "Flow" comes naturally when you practice an activity enough that you don't have to think about it. As with exercise, there are endless possibilities. So pick a creative activity you enjoy or one you're drawn to, put it on your to-do list along with grocery shopping and the like, and don't let it slide off.

And then get ready to flourish!